

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the Application as follows.

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph at page 2, lines 22-25 of the specification with the following:

The invention accordingly provides silicon nitride materials containing sintering aids and SiO_2 and having a molar ratio of the silicon dioxide in the grain boundary phase to the sintering aids including SiO_2 in the grain boundary phase is $>60\%$, preferably $>65\%$, and the oxide nitride content (~~$\text{SiO}_2\text{N}_2\text{O}$~~) ($\text{Si}_2\text{N}_2\text{O}$) is $<1\%$.